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In Re Application of: Sergio Abgrignani

Serial No.: Not Yet Assigned

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Examiner: Not Yet Assigned

For: T CELL ACTIVATION

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Box ☒ Patent Application
☐ Provisional ☐ Design

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington DC 20231

Sir:

PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Transmitted herewith for filing, please find

☒ A Utility Patent Application under 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b).

It is a continuing application, as follows:

☒ continuation ☐ divisional ☐ continuation-in-part of prior application number
08/776,259, filed January 21, 1997.

☐ A Provisional Patent Application under 37 C.F.R. 1.53(c).

☐ A Design Patent Application (submitted in duplicate).

Including the following:

- ☐ Provisional Application Cover Sheet.
- ☐ New or Revised Specification, including pages ____ to ____ containing:
- ☐ Specification
 - ☐ Claims
 - ☐ Abstract
 - ☐ Substitute Specification, including Claims and Abstract.
- ☐ The present application is a continuation application of Application No. ____ filed _____. The present application includes the Specification of the parent application which has been revised in accordance with the amendments filed in the parent application. Since none of those amendments incorporate new matter into the parent application, the present revised Specification also does not include new matter.
- ☐ The present application is a continuation application of Application No. ____ filed _____, which in turn is a continuation-in-part of Application No. _____ filed _____. The present application includes the Specification of the parent application which has been revised in accordance with the amendments filed in the parent application. Although the amendments in the parent C-I-P application may have incorporated new matter, since those are the only revisions included in the present application, the present application includes no new matter in relation to the parent application.
- ☒ A copy of earlier application Serial No. **08/776,259, Filed: January 21, 1997**, including Specification, Claims and Abstract (**pages 1 - 22**), to which no new matter has been added TOGETHER WITH all drawings and appendices for such earlier application and. Such earlier application is hereby incorporated into the present application by reference.
- ☒ Please enter the following amendment to the Specification under the Cross-Reference to Related Applications section (or create such a section) : "This Application:
- ☒ is a continuation of ☐ is a divisional of ☐ claims benefit of U.S. Application Serial

No. 08/776,259, filed on January 21, 1997, which claims priority benefit of International Application No. PCT/IB95/00691, filed on August 17, 1995, which claims priority of United Kingdom 9416657.6, filed on August 17, 1994, all applications incorporated by reference herein in their entireties.

- ☐ Signed Statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application.
- ☐ A Preliminary Amendment.
- ☒ **Eleven Sheets of Figures 1A-6** Sheets of ☒ Formal ☐ Informal Drawings.
- ☐ Petition to Accept Photographic Drawings.
- ☐ Petition Fee
- ☒ A Copy of ☒ Executed ☐ Unexecuted Declaration or Oath and Power of Attorney from prior application Serial No. 08/776,259, filed on January 21, 1997.
- ☐ An Associate Power of Attorney.
- ☐ An ☐ Executed ☐ Copy of Executed Assignment of the Invention to _____
- ☐ A Recordation Form Cover Sheet.
- ☐ Recordation Fee - \$40.00.
- ☒ The prior application is assigned of record to **Chiron S.p.A.**
- ☒ Priority is claimed under 35 U.S.C. § 119 of Patent Application No. **9416657.6**, filed on **August 17, 1994** in **United Kingdom** (country).
- ☒ A Certified Copy of each of the above applications for which priority is claimed:
- ☐ is enclosed.
- ☒ has been filed in prior application Serial No. **08/776,259, filed on January 21, 1997.**
- ☐ will be forwarded in due course.

- ☐ An ☐ Executed or ☐ Copy of Executed Earlier Statement Claiming Small Entity Status under 37 C.F.R. 1.9 and 1.27
☐ is enclosed.
☐ has been filed in prior application Serial No. _____ filed _____, said status is still proper and desired in present case.
- ☐ Diskette Containing DNA/Amino Acid Sequence Information.
- ☐ Statement to Support Submission of DNA/Amino Acid Sequence Information.
- ☐ The computer readable form in this continuation application, is identical with that filed in Application Serial Number _____, filed on _____. In accordance with 37 CFR 1.821(e), please use the ☐ first-filed, ☐ last-filed or ☐ only computer readable form filed in that application as the computer readable form for the instant application. It is understood that the Patent and Trademark Office will make the necessary change in application number and filing date for the computer readable form that will be used for the instant application. A paper copy of the Sequence Listing is ☐ included in the originally-filed specification of the instant application, ☐ included in a separately filed preliminary amendment for incorporation into the specification.
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement.
☐ Attached Form 1449.
☐ Copies of each of the references listed on the attached Form PTO-1449 are enclosed herewith.
- ☐ A copy of Petition for Extension of Time as filed in the prior case.
- ☐ Appended Material as follows: _____.
- ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (should be specifically itemized).
- ☐ Other as follows: _____.

FEE CALCULATION:

- ☐ Cancel in this application original claims _____ of the prior application before calculating the filing fee. (At least one original independent claim must be retained for filing purposes.)

			SMALL ENTITY		NOT SMALL ENTITY	
			RATE	FEE	RATE	FEE
PROVISIONAL APPLICATION			\$75.00	\$	\$150.00	\$
DESIGN APPLICATION			\$155.00	\$	\$310.00	\$
UTILITY APPLICATIONS BASE FEE			\$345.00	\$	\$690.00	\$690.00
UTILITY APPLICATION; ALL CLAIMS CALCULATED AFTER ENTRY OF ALL AMENDMENTS						
	No. Filed	No. Extra				
TOTAL CLAIMS	11 - 20 =		\$9 each	\$	\$18 each	\$
INDEP. CLAIMS	3 - 3 =		\$39 each	\$	\$78 each	\$
FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM			\$130	\$	\$260	\$260.00
ADDITIONAL FILING FEE				\$		\$
TOTAL FILING FEE DUE				\$		\$950.00


- ☒ A check is enclosed in the amount of **\$950.00**.
- ☒ The Commissioner is authorized to charge payment of the following fees and to refund any overpayment associated with this communication or during the pendency of this application to deposit account 23-3050. This sheet is provided in duplicate.
- ☐ The foregoing amount due.
- ☒ Any additional filing fees required, including fees for the presentation of extra claims under 37 C.F.R. 1.16.
- ☒ Any additional patent application processing fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.17 or 1.20(d).
- ☐ The issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance.

- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby requested to grant an extension of time for the appropriate length of time, should one be necessary, in connection with this filing or any future filing submitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in the above-identified application during the pendency of this application. The Commissioner is further authorized to charge any fees related to any such extension of time to deposit account 23-3050. This sheet is provided in duplicate.

SHOULD ANY DEFICIENCIES APPEAR with respect to this application, including deficiencies in payment of fees, missing parts of the application or otherwise, the United States Patent and Trademark Office is respectfully requested to promptly notify the undersigned.

Date:

March 7, 2000


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T Cell Activation

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to an antigen independent method for the activation of T cells. The invention also relates to a method for increasing lymphokine production in a T cell culture and a method for increasing the immune response at specific sites in vivo which has therapeutic
10 applications in the treatment of disease.

Background to the Invention

T cells are involved in the immune response and are
15 primarily involved in cellular immunity, such as guarding against virally infected cells, fungi, parasites and foreign tissue.

Briefly, T cells are activated by binding to antigen-
20 displaying macrophages. However, the T cell receptor must specifically complex with the antigen and a Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC) protein displayed on the surface of the macrophage.

25 The binding induces the macrophage to release interleukin-1, a polypeptide growth factor, which stimulates the bound T cell to proliferate and differentiate. This proliferation and differentiation is enhanced by the T cells autostimulatory secretion interleukin-2. The T cell can
30 differentiate into a number of different phenotypes, such as cytotoxic T cells which are specifically targeted to antigen displaying host cells and are capable of lysing the cell, helper T cells which are involved in activating cytotoxic T cells and in co-operating with B cells to produce antibodies
35 and memory T cells which upon re-encountering their cognate antigen proliferate at a faster rate than non-memory T cells.

It will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the activation of T cells is an important step in the immunological response. By manipulating the activation of T cells it will be possible to obtain useful immunological products and develop more efficient treatment techniques.

Previously, to achieve T cell activation, a macrophage displaying an antigen and an MHC protein was required. A number of problems and drawbacks are associated with this, a major drawback being that only T cells specific for the antigen are activated. Other T cells not specific for the antigen remain unactivated. Other problems may arise if the desired antigen is difficult to obtain or hazardous to work with. Additionally, if an antigen is used in cell culture to achieve activation and it is not easy to remove, contamination problems may occur.

The same problems will occur *in vivo* and it is obviously undesirable to infect an individual with an antigenic substance.

By achieving antigen independent T cell activation it will be possible to activate a population of T cells without the need to isolate and display an antigen on the surface of macrophage.

It is known that interleukin-2 is potent T-lymphocyte growth enhancer and the use of interleukin-2 as an adjuvant has been described. In this role interleukin-2 was thought to function as an expander of the population of already activated T-lymphocytes. However, it was not known that interleukin-2 (in combination with other cytokines) could act specifically to activate T-lymphocytes in an antigen independent manner.

Summary of the Invention

According to the present invention there is provided a

method for antigen independent activation of T cells comprising contacting T cells with a combination of cytokines.

5 Preferably, the T cells are contacted with at least two of the following:

- i) interleukin-2;
- ii) interleukin-6; and
- 10 iii) tumour necrosis factor α

or functionally equivalent fragments thereof.

The T cells may be naive T cells and/or memory resting T
15 cells, most suitably naive CD45RA⁺ cells and/or memory resting CD45RO⁺ cells.

Suitably, the concentration of interleukin-2 is from 100 to 400 U/ml, the concentration of interleukin-6 is from 400 to
20 600 U/ml and the concentration of tumour necrosis factor α is from 15 to 35 ng/ml. More preferably, the concentration of interleukin-2 is from 200 to 300 U/ml, the concentration of interleukin-6 is about 500 U/ml and the concentration of tumour necrosis factor α is about 25 ng/ml.

25

The T cells may be activated *in vitro*, for example, in a method for obtaining increased lymphokine production from a T cell culture, comprising activating the T cells according to the invention.

30

The T cells wherein T cells may be activated *in vivo*, leading to an enhanced immunological response which may be used in a method of therapy comprising activating in a human or animal subject T cells using the method according to the

35 invention.

In this aspect of the invention, the combination of cytokines acts as an adjuvant enhancing the T-cell response

and thereby enhancing the immune response.

T cells can be activated to produce desirable lymphokines useful in cell-mediated immune responses, such as
5 interleukins, interferons and colony stimulating factors, without the problems associated with antigen dependent activation.

Additionally, it will be possible to achieve isolated T cell
10 activation and effector T cell recruitment in areas of specific immunological interest without the use of antigens. This will thus be extremely useful for the *in vivo* treatment of numerous diseases and infections such as HIV and Hepatitis.

15 The present invention has the advantages of activating "by-stander" T cells, not just specifically one particular stimulating antigen, thus a bigger immune response is produced leading to the production of more lymphokines and
20 subsequently greater immunoglobulin production by B cells.

Another advantage of the present invention is the maintenance of the peripheral pool of memory T cells as memory T cells can be expanded (proliferated) without the
25 need of specific antigenic stimulation to maintain the clonal size. Also the naive T cell repertoire can be maintained, as the present invention allows the proliferation of naive T cells without them switching to the memory phenotype, unlike in antigenic stimulation.

30 According to a further aspect of the invention there is provided a pharmaceutical composition comprising two or more of the following:

- 35 i) interleukin-2;
 ii) interleukin-6; and
 iii) tumour necrosis factor α

or functionally equivalent fragments thereof optionally in association with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable excipients.

- 5 The pharmaceutical composition may itself be useful for the therapeutic activation of T-cells or may be administered with a further therapeutic agent such as a vaccine. Administration may be simultaneous or sequential.
- 10 According to the present invention there is provided a method of gene therapy comprising the step of administering a vector carrying a genes encoding two or more of

- 15 i) interleukin-2;
 ii) interleukin-6; and
 iii) tumour necrosis factor α

or functionally equivalent fragments thereof.

- 20 Suitable such vectors are well known in the art¹.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided a combined method of therapy comprising coadministration of a vector carrying a gene encoding one
25 or more of

- i) interleukin-2;
 ii) interleukin-6; and
 iii) tumour necrosis factor α

30 or functionally equivalent fragments thereof

and one or more of

- 35 i) interleukin-2;
 ii) interleukin-6; and

¹Reference?

iii) tumour necrosis factor α

proteins or functionally equivalent fragments thereof.

- 5 Such maintenance of specific T cell types is extremely advantageous when working with T cell cultures.

Many other uses and advantages can be seen for the present invention and such uses and advantages would be apparent to
10 one skilled in the art.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1. Phenotypic and cell cycle analysis of purified
15 CD4⁺ resting T cells. (A) forward and side scatter profile. (B) Cell cycle analysis. (C) FITC- or PE-conjugated control antibodies. (D-F) Purity of CD4⁺ cells and expression of activation markers. (G) Expression of CD45RA and CD45RO Ags on sorted CD4⁺ cells. (H and I) CD4⁺ cells purified as
20 CD45RO⁺ or CD45RA⁺ subpopulations.

Figure 2. Activation of resting CD4⁺ T cells by soluble factors. (A and B) Expression of activation markers on resting T cells cultured with supernatant from T cell clones
25 cultured with autologous macrophages prepulsed with Ag (hatched bars) or medium (solid bars), or rIL-2 (open bars). Expression of CD69 or CD25 was analyzed in double staining with anti-CD4. (C) [³H]Thymidine incorporation of the same cells in A and B, cultured with medium alone (triangles),
30 rIL-2 (squares), or supernatant from a T cell clone cultured with macrophages prepulsed with Ag (closed circle) or medium (open circle). (D) [³H]Thymidine incorporation of resting CD45RO⁺ (squares) or CD45RA⁺ (circles) T cells in the presence of different concentration of IL-2 plus 1 μ g/ml LPS
35 (open symbols), or IL-2 with supernatant from LPS-activated macrophages (closed symbols).

Figure 3. Combination of IL-2, TNF- α , and IL-6 activates

resting T cells. CD45RO⁺ (A) or CD45RA⁺ (B) resting T cells were cultured for 8 d with various combinations of the following: rIL-2, rIL-6, TNF- α , and supernatant from LPS-stimulated macrophages. Thymidine incorporation and CD69 expression were measured as described in Fig. 1. (C) Cell cycle analysis of resting CD45RO⁺ (squares) or CD45RA⁺ (circles) T cells in the presence of IL-2 alone (open symbols) or in combination with TNF- α and IL-6 (closed symbols).

10

Figure 4. CD45RA⁺ T cells activated by cytokines do not switch their phenotype to CD45RO. CD45RA⁺ T cells were activated by combination of IL-2, TNF- α , and IL-6, and after 23 days were double stained with anti-CD45RA-FITC and anti-CD45RO-PE antibodies.

Figure 5. Expression of IFN γ and IL-4 mRNA by cytokine-activated T cells. Purified CD4⁺ CD45RO⁺ resting T cells are cultured with IL-2 alone for 60 (lane 1) and 100 h (lane 3) or with IL-2, TNF- α , and IL-6 for 60 (lane 2) and 100 h (lane 4) as described in Materials and Methods. (Lane 5) Positive template; (lane 6) negative control.

Figure 6. Frequency of resting T cells that grow in response to cytokine combination. CD45RO⁺ resting T cells were plated in the presence of purified autologous macrophages, anti-DR mAb with IL-2 alone (closed circles) or in combination (open circles) with TNF- α and IL-6. (Dotted lines) 95% confidence limits.

30

Detailed Description of Embodiment

Materials and Methods

35 **Purification of Resting T Cells.** After Ficoll-Hypaque (Pharmacia) separation of PBMC from buffy coats of healthy donors, most macrophages were removed by plastic adherence. To obtain a pure resting CD4⁺ T cell population, cells were

incubated with a cocktail of mAbs against HLA-DR (L-243; American Type Culture Collection [ATCC], Rockville, MD), CD19 (4GT), CD16 (B73.1), CD56 (MY31), CD57 (HNK-1, ATCC), CD8 (OKT8, ATCC), CD11b (OKM-1, ATCC), CD14 (MØ-P9), TCR-c/6 (B1, a gift of G. De Libero, ZLF Basel, Switzerland), CD25 (2A3), CD69 (L78), and CD71 (L01.1). After 30-min incubation on ice, cells were washed twice and incubated with magnetic beads (Dynabeads; Dynal, Oslo, Norway) conjugated with goat anti-mouse IgG and rat anti-mouse IgM, at a 1:4 target/bead ratio. After 30-min incubation, bead-bound cells were removed using rare earth magnet (Advanced Magnetism, Inc., Cambridge, MA). Remaining cells were further purified with four more incubations with beads at increasing target/bead ratios (1:10 to 1:100). Final population was used as a source of resting CD4⁺ T cells when >99.3% of the population was TCRα/β⁺ (WT/31) and CD4⁺ (Leu 3a), as determined by immunofluorescence analyses using a FACScan[®] flow cytometer (Becton Dickinson & Co., Mountain View, CA), and fulfilled the following criteria; (a) small size at the FACS[®] scatter; (b) absence of FACS[®]-detectable levels of the activation markers (CD69, CD71, MHC-DR and IL-2 receptor p55 chain (CD25); (c) absence of cells in the S and G₂/M parts of the cell cycle; and (d) no significant incorporation of [³H]thymidine when exposed to IL-2. In some experiments resting cells were further negatively sorted as CD45RO⁺ (adding the mAb UCHL-1) or CD45RA⁺ (adding the mAb L48). If not otherwise indicated, all the mAbs were from Becton Dickinson & Co.

Preparation of Supernatants. T cells (5×10^3 /ml) from a tetanus toxoid (TT)-specific clone were cultured with autologous macrophages (2.5×10^5 /ml) that had been prepulsed with or without TT (3 µg/ml) (Biocine Sclavo, Siena, Italy). After 16 h, supernatants were collected and filtered with 0.2-µm filters. Culture medium has been previously described (3) using 5% human serum or plasma. Effective supernatants were prepared using medium with either 5% human serum (from Florence blood bank) or serum-

free media (HL-1: Ventrex, Portland, OR). Similar results were obtained with resting T cells derived from PBMC of six different healthy individuals and with supernatants from activated CD4⁺ T cell clones, with different specificity
5 (purified protein derivatives [PPD] or pertussis toxin), from four different persons (see Fig. 2 and data not shown).

Cell Cycle Analysis. This was performed as described (4) using propidium iodide in combination with anti-CD4 mAb
10 (FITC labelled) staining. Analyses were performed with the FACScan[®] Lysis II software and doublet discrimination program (Becton Dickinson & Co.).

Purification of B Cells. PBMC-derived B cells were stained
15 with FITC-labelled anti-CD19 mAb and purified by positive sorting with FACStar[®] (Becton Dickinson & Co). Purity was >98% as determined by staining with anti-CD20 and anti-Ig.

Helper Assay. Noncognate helper assays were performed as
20 previously described (5). Briefly, purified autologous PBMC-derived B cells (2×10^3 /well) were cocultured for 12 d with CD4⁺CD45RO⁺ resting T cells (3×10^4 /well) in the presence of cytokine combinations as described (see Fig. 3) or on anti-CD3-coated plates. To avoid an effect of
25 cytokines on B cell differentiation, plates were washed after 4-d culture and cytokine combinations were replaced with IL-2 alone. Ig in the supernatants was measured by ELISA (5).

Activation of Resting T cells by Supernatants. Resting T
30 cells were cultured in 96-well flat-bottom plates (5×10^4 /well) with supernatant (50% vol/vol) from T cell clones cultured with autologous macrophages prepulsed with Ag, medium or rIL-2 (Cetus Corp., Emeryville, CA) at a
35 concentration corresponding to that found in the T cell supernatants (i.e. 200-300 U/ml). Activation was measured at various time points as expression of CD69 and CD25 of [³H]thymidine incorporation. In some experiments,

[³H]thymidine incorporation of resting CD45RO⁺ or CD45RA⁺ T cells was measured in the presence of different concentrations of IL-2 plus either 1 µg/ml LPS (Difco, Detroit, MI) or supernatant (50% vol/vol) from LPS-activated macrophages. For the preparation of activated macrophage supernatant, 5 x 10⁵ macrophages were simulated with 1 µg/ml LPS (for 6-8 h). [³H]Thymidine incorporation experiments were performed as described (5). The results represent the mean of triplicate wells and SD was always 15%.

10

Activation of Resting T Cells by Recombinant Cytokines. Resting T cells (5 x 10⁴/well) in 96-well flat-bottom microplates were cultured for 8 d with various combinations of the following rIL-2 (200-300 U/ml), rIL-6 (500 U/ml; Ciba-Geigy, Basel, Switzerland; IL-6 units were determined with the B9 assay), TNF-α (25 ng/ml; Genzyme Corp., Cambridge, MA), and supernatant (50% vol/vol) from LPS-stimulated macrophages. Thymidine incorporation and CD69 expression were measured as described in Fig. 2. IL-1b (up to 100 ng/ml, Biocine Sclavo Siena, Italy) in combination with IL-2 and TNF-α did not have any activities (data not shown). Recombinant cytokines from two different sources have been used with similar results. The optimal concentration of cytokines was established in preliminary dose-response experiments.

PCR-assisted mRNA Amplification. Purified resting CD4⁺ CD45RO⁺ T cells were cultured with TNF-α plus IL-6 plus IL-2, or IL-2 alone. Total RNA was isolated after 60-100 h of culture from 5 x 10⁵ cells, by RNazol[®] B (Biotecx Laboratories, Houston, TX). cDNA was synthesized with murine reverse transcriptase as described (5). β-actin, IL-4, and IFN-γ specific primer pairs were purchased from Clontech (Palo Alto, CA). PCR was performed as described (5).

Limiting Dilution Analyses. CD45RO⁺ resting T cells were plated at different numbers in Terasaki plates (64 wells per

10

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Since the activating supernatant is produced by the coculture of two cell types, we sought to determine the relative contribution of soluble factors produced by T cells and APCs. For this experiment, resting CD4⁺ T cells were
35 further purified as CD45RO⁺ (memory) and CD45RA⁺ (naive) subpopulation (10), since they may have different activation requirements as already reported for TCR-mediated activation (11, 12). Fig. 2D shows that supernatant from LPS-activated

macrophages alone, as IL-2 alone, did not have any activity, whereas macrophage supernatant in combination with IL-2 induced thymidine incorporation in both CD45RA⁺ and CD45RO⁺ resting T cells. These results demonstrate that IL-2 and soluble factor(s) produced by APCs are required for the activation of resting T cells.

To identify the APC-derived factor(s), we tested the effect of recombinant cytokines known to be produced by macrophages and to have costimulatory activity on T cells, i.e., IL-1 β , IL-6 and TNF- α (13-15). In the absence of IL-2 all the possible combinations of these cytokines did not show any activity over a wide range of concentrations (data not shown). Fig. 3A shows that TNF- α in combination with IL-2 induced resting CD45RO⁺ T cells to express CD69 and to incorporate thymidine, whereas IL-6 in combination with IL-2 was much less effective. Remarkably, TNF- α and IL-6, in combination with IL-2, had a synergistic effect leading to a stronger activation. A similar effect of IL-2, IL-6, and TNF α was also observed on CD45RA⁺ resting T cells (Fig. 3B), although, in this case, all three cytokines were required to induce activation. Furthermore, the cell cycle analyses in Fig. 3C show that at day 7 of culture 8% of both CD45RO⁺ and CD45RA⁺ T cells are in the S or G₂/M phases of the cell cycle. Activation of cytokines, measured as expression of activation markers, thymidine incorporation, or entry into cell cycle, was never inhibited by mAbs specific for DR, CD4, or CD3 (data not shown), thus confirming that TCR signalling is not involved in this type of activation.

30

It is interesting to note that we have observed that CD45RA⁺ T cells activated by cytokines do not switch their phenotype to CD45RO, as was reported to occur within a few days after TCR engagement (16). CD45RA⁺ T cells activated by combination of IL-2, TNF- α , and IL-6 were double stained with anti-CD45RA and anti-CD45RO antibodies at 3-d intervals up to day 23 of culture. We never found single positive CD45RO⁺ cells at any time point, and only found a few

percent of double positive CD45RA⁺ ^{high}/CD45RO⁺ ^{high}. Indeed, Fig. 4 shows that naive T cells even 23 d after cytokine activation, when most cells are blastic and express CD69 (data not shown), are mainly CD45RA⁺. The same cells
 5 activated with anti-CD3 switched in few days to the CD45RO⁺ CD45RA⁻ phenotype (data not shown).

We next asked whether resting T lymphocytes can be activated by cytokines to display effector function. We performed
 10 PCR-assisted mRNA amplification for lymphokines. Fig. 5 shows that both IFN- γ and IL-4 mRNA are expressed by CD45RO⁺ T cells cultured with IL-2, TNF- α , and IL-6, but not with IL-2 alone. Moreover, CD45RO⁺ T cells activated by cytokine combination are as effective as anti-CD3-stimulated T cells
 15 in helping B cells to produce Ig (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Resting CD45RO⁺ T Cells Activated by Cytokines Can Provide Help to B Cells

20		IgM	IgG	IgA
			ng/ml	
	B cells cocultured with:			
	IL-2 plus TNF- α plus IL-6	<15	<5	<10
25	T cells plus medium	<15	<5	<10
	T cells plus IL-2	<15	<5	<10
	T cells plus IL-2 plus TNF- α	32	23	<10
	T cells plus IL-2 plus IL-6	<15	31	28
30	T cells plus IL-2 plus TNF- α plus IL-6	75	274	308
	T cells plus anti-CD3 mAb plus IL-2	235	219	413
35				

To exclude the possibility that T cell help to B cells could be due to activation of autoreactive cells, at the end of

the helper assay, the B cells were removed by sorting, and the CD4⁺ T cells were tested in proliferation against autologous purified B cells or macrophages. We never found any autoreactive proliferation (data not shown).

5

Neither cytokines nor anti-CD3 induced CD45RA⁺ T cells to produce IFN- γ (<1 IU/ml) and to help B cells (data not shown). Thus, we conclude that, similar to TCR-mediated activation (17), cytokines recruit CD45RA⁺ T cells to
10 proliferate but not to help Ig production, whereas they activate resting CD45RO⁺ T cells to proliferate and display effector functions.

To evaluate the frequency of resting T cells with memory
15 phenotype that could be stimulated by cytokines to grow, we performed limiting dilution experiments. CD45RO⁺ CD4⁺ resting T cells were cultured with IL-2 alone or in combination with TNF- α and IL-6, in the presence of autologous irradiated macrophages and anti-DR antibodies to
20 prevent autoreactive responses. Fig. 6 shows that 1 of 33 resting CD45RO⁺ CD4⁺ T cells grew to a visible clone in response to IL-2, TNF- α , and IL-6. At present we do not know why only 3% of cells grew in response to cytokines. The cells that proliferated could have been a subset of
25 resting T cells or could have been at a different stage of maturation/activation. It is possible that many cells (\approx 20%) respond to cytokines and express activation markers. Some of these cells will display effector functions and only a minority (3%) will be able to grow in vitro to a clone of
30 visible size.

TNF- α and IL-6 both have been shown to upregulate IL-2R expression on T cells (15, 18). This could be a possible mechanism for the activation of resting T cells by this
35 cytokine combination. However, resting T cells cultured for 1-3 d with TNF- α and IL-6, and washed and cultured for 4-5 d more with IL-2, did not show FACS^c-detectable levels of IL-2R (p55) (data not shown), whereas IL-2R was expressed

on $\approx 20\%$ of the same cells cultured with TNF- α , IL-6, and IL-2 from the beginning of the culture. This experiment, however, does not rule out the possibility that low levels of IL-2R below the FACS[®] sensitivity, are expressed and functionally relevant. Indeed, it has been reported that IL-2 is required for induction of IL-2R by TNF- α or IL-6 (19). Furthermore, IL-2 augments not only expression of its own receptor (20) but also upregulates TNF- α receptor (21). Elucidation of the mechanism of activation of resting T cells by cytokines will require additional biochemical and molecular analyses.

This novel Ag-independent pathway of T cell activation may play two important roles in vivo, by recruiting effector T cells at the site of immune response and by maintaining the peripheral pool of memory T cells. A scenario could be depicted where resting T cells at sites of Ag-specific response are activated by cytokines produced by specific T cells and macrophages to proliferate and to secrete other lymphokines that can further amplify the response. Indeed, the frequency of resting CD45RO⁺ T cells that respond to cytokine combination is definitely higher than the usual frequency of T cells primed by any known Ags.

It has been postulated that memory can be carried by long-lived clones consisting of short-lived cells that require repeated, intermittent stimulation by persisting Ag, by recurrent infection, or by cross-reacting environmental Ags (22-24). In the light of our results, it is tempting to speculate that memory T cells may not require antigenic stimuli to maintain their clonal size, since resting T cells with memory phenotype (CD45RO⁺) can be expanded by cytokines secreted during responses to unrelated antigens. On the other hand, cytokines can induce proliferation of naive cells without switch to memory phenotype and may therefore help to maintain the naive (CD45RA⁺) T cell repertoire.

It will be understood that the invention is described above

by way of example only and modifications within the scope and spirit of the invention may be made.

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Claims

1. A method for antigen independent activation of T cells comprising contacting T cells with a combination of cytokines.
5
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the T cells are contacted with at least two of the following:
 - 10 i) interleukin-2;
 - ii) interleukin-6; and
 - iii) tumour necrosis factor αor functionally equivalent fragments thereof.
15
3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the T cells are naive T cells and/or memory resting T cells.
4. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the
20 T cells are naive CD45RA⁺ cells and/or memory resting CD45RO⁺ cells.
5. The method of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the concentration of interleukin-2 is from 100 to 400
25 U/ml, the concentration of interleukin-6 is from 400 to 600 U/ml and the concentration of tumour necrosis factor α is from 15 to 35 ng/ml.
6. The method of any one of the preceding claims, wherein
30 the concentration of interleukin-2 is from 200 to 300 U/ml, the concentration of interleukin-6 is about 500 U/ml and the concentration of tumour necrosis factor α is about 25 ng/ml.
- 35 7. The method of any one of the preceding claims, wherein T cells are activated *in vitro*.
8. A method for obtaining increased lymphokine production

from a T cell culture, comprising activating the T cells using the method of claim 7.

- 5 9. The method of any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein T cells are activated *in vivo*.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein the activation of T cells *in vivo* leads to an enhanced immunological response.
- 10 11. A method of therapy comprising activating in a human or animal subject T cells using the method of claim 9 or 10.

DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

T CELL ACTIVATION

the specification of which (check one) ___ is attached hereto ___ was filed on ___ and was amended on ___ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s) Number	Country	Day/Month/Year Filed	Priority Claimed	
			Yes	No
9416857.6	GB	17 August 1994	X	
PCT/IB96/00691	PCT	17 August 1995	X	

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

Application Serial No.	Filing Date	Status
		Patented Pending Abandoned

I hereby declare that all statements herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States code and that such

Page:
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without false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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Inventor's signature: *S. Abrignani*

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17th January 1997

Residence:

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53040 VAGLIAGLI, ITALY

Citizenship:

ITALY

Post Office Address:

Same as above

FIG. 1(A)

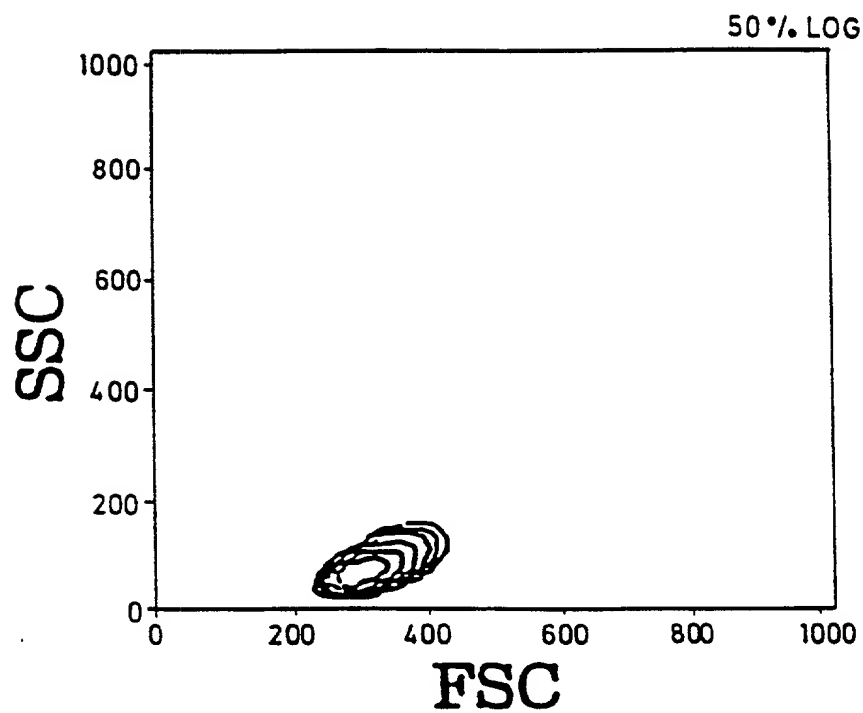
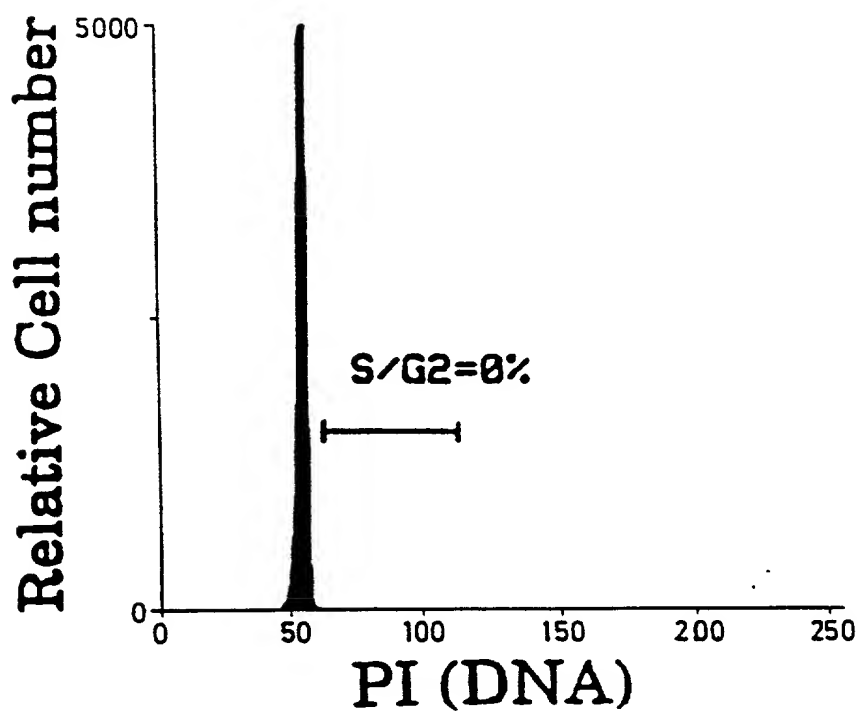


FIG. 1(B)



2 / 1 1

FIG. 1(C)

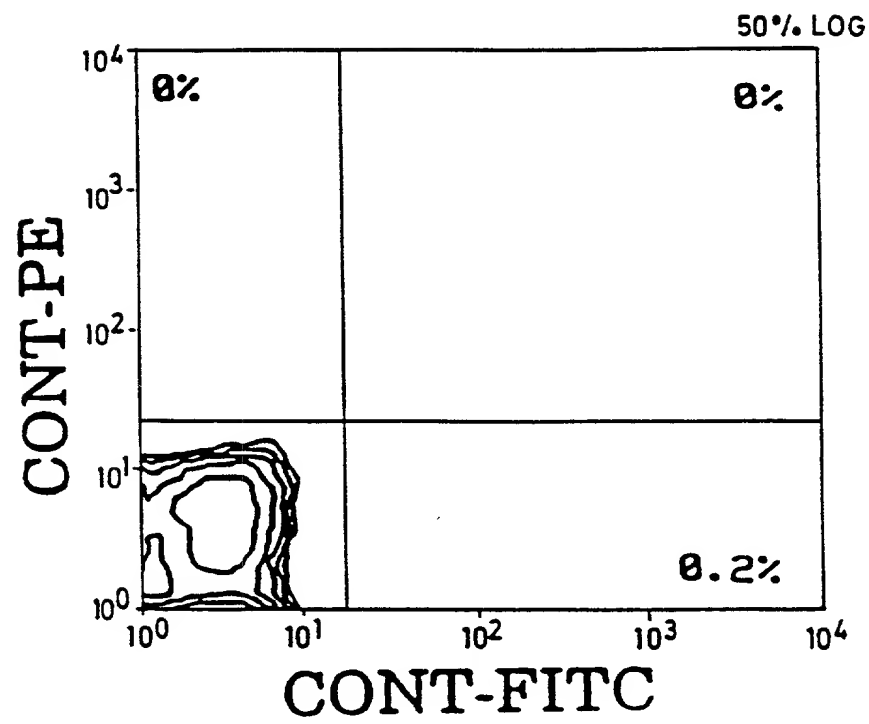
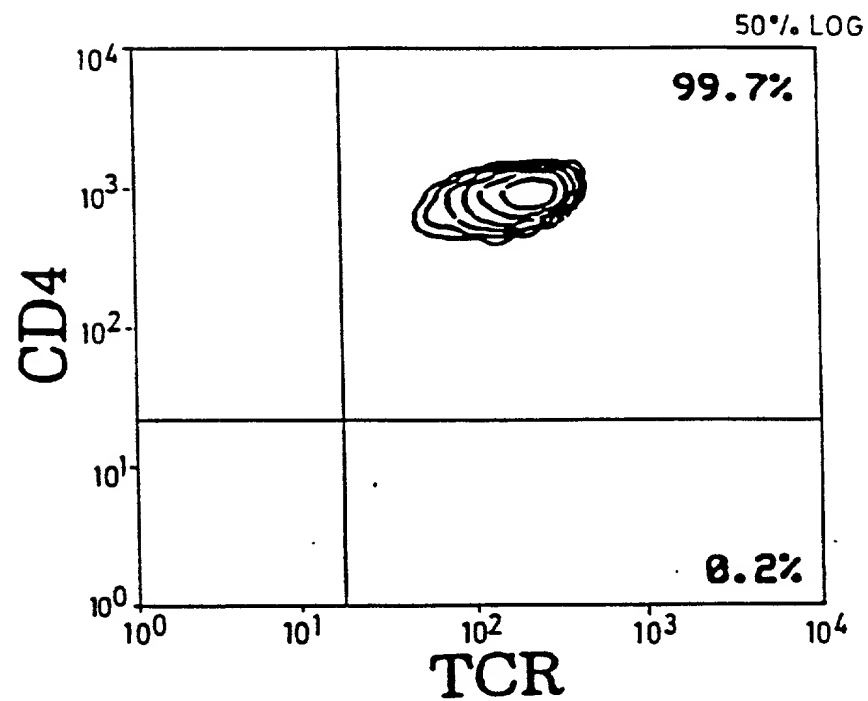


FIG. 1(D)



3 / 1 1

FIG. 1(E)

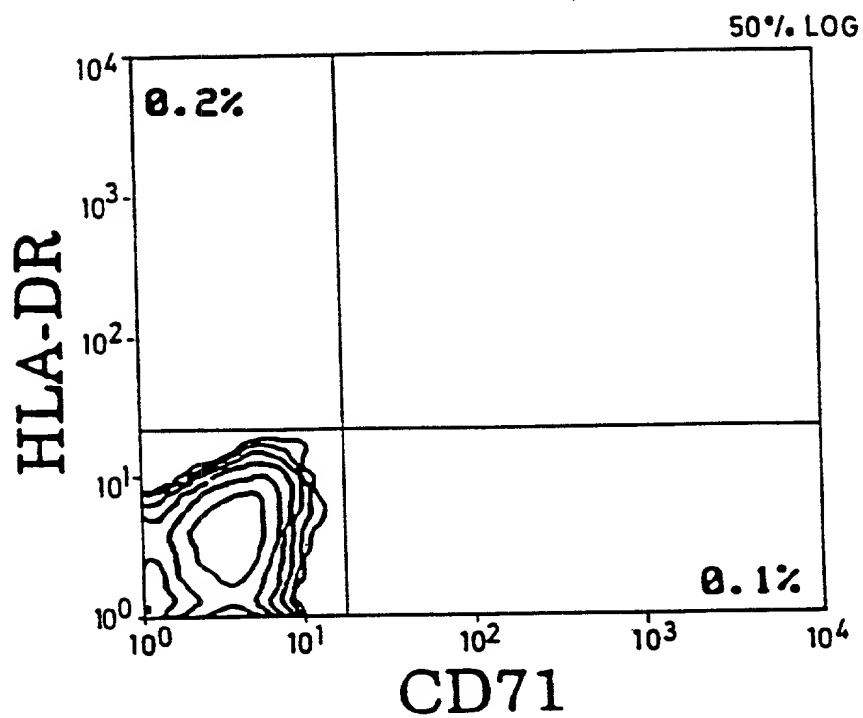
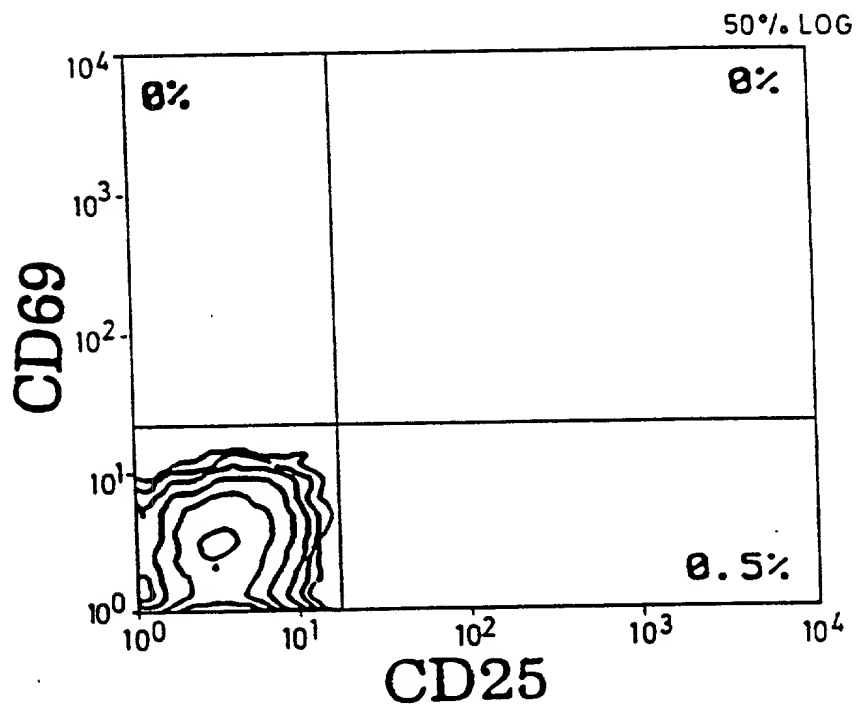


FIG. 1(F)



4 / 1 1

FIG.1(G)

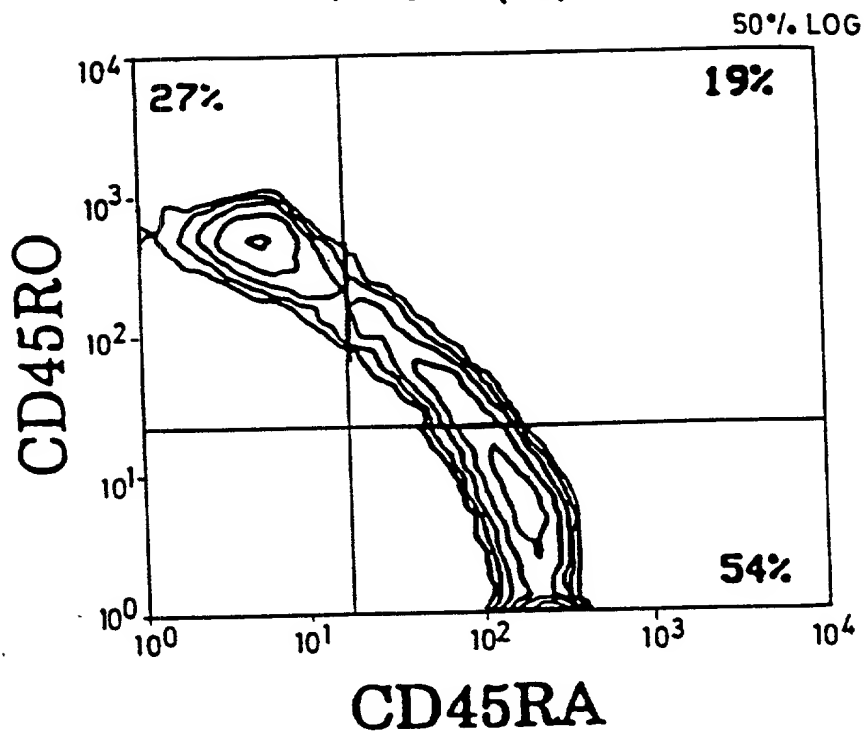


FIG.1(H)

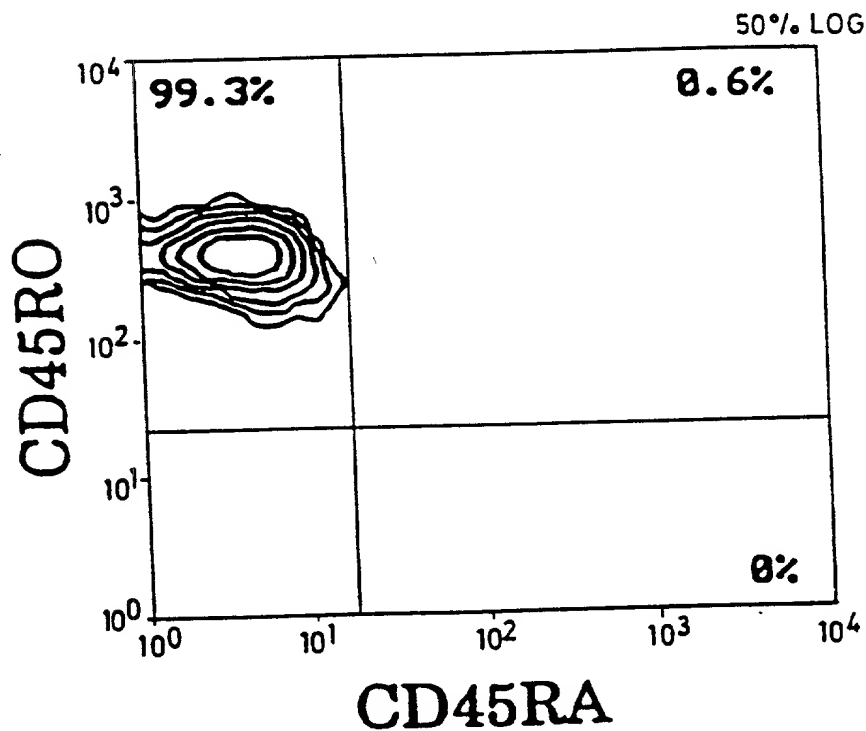
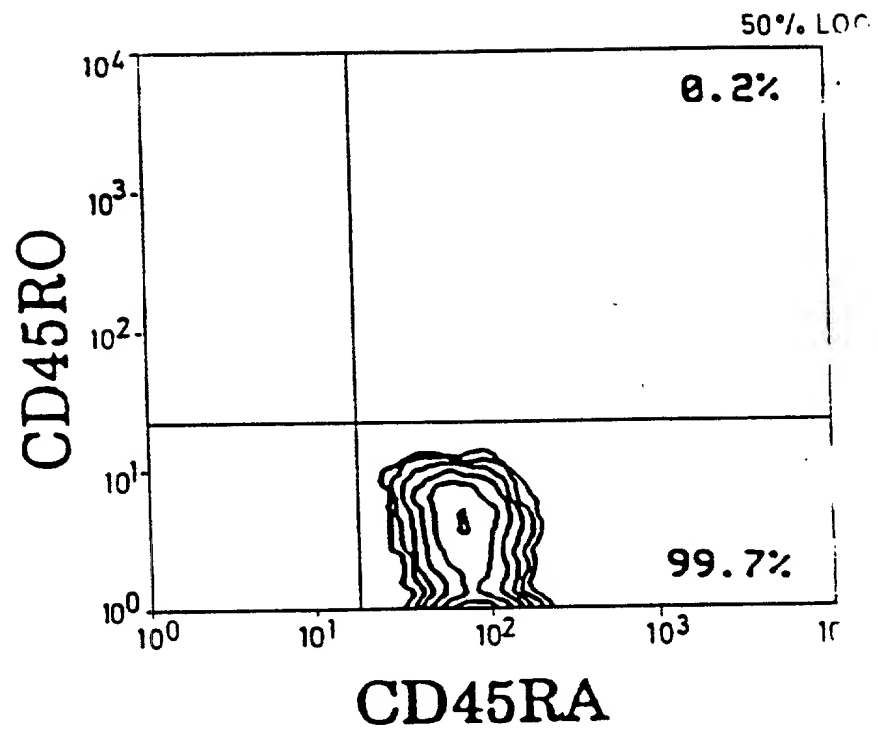


FIG. 1(I)



6 / 1 1

FIG.2A

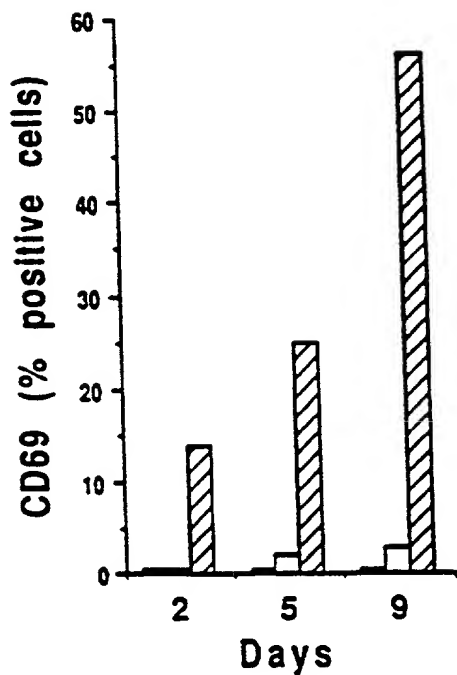


FIG.2B

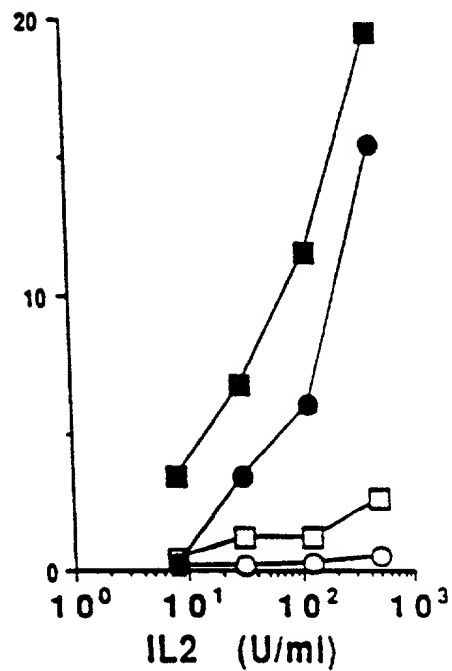
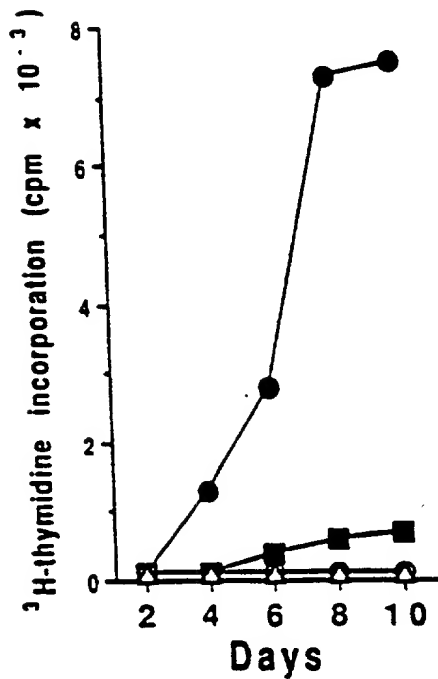
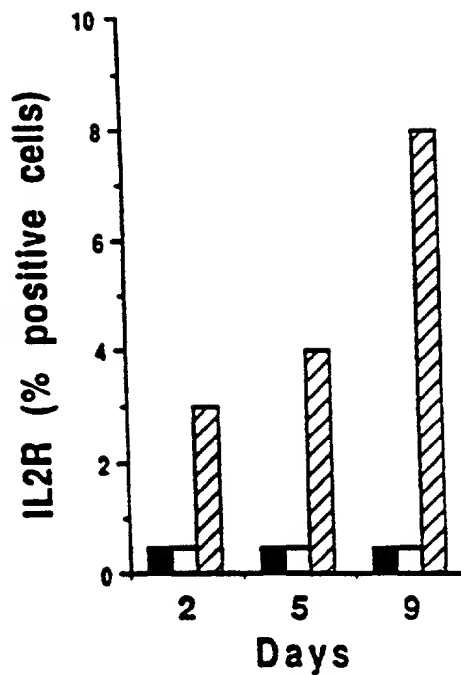


FIG.2C

FIG.2D

7 / 1 1

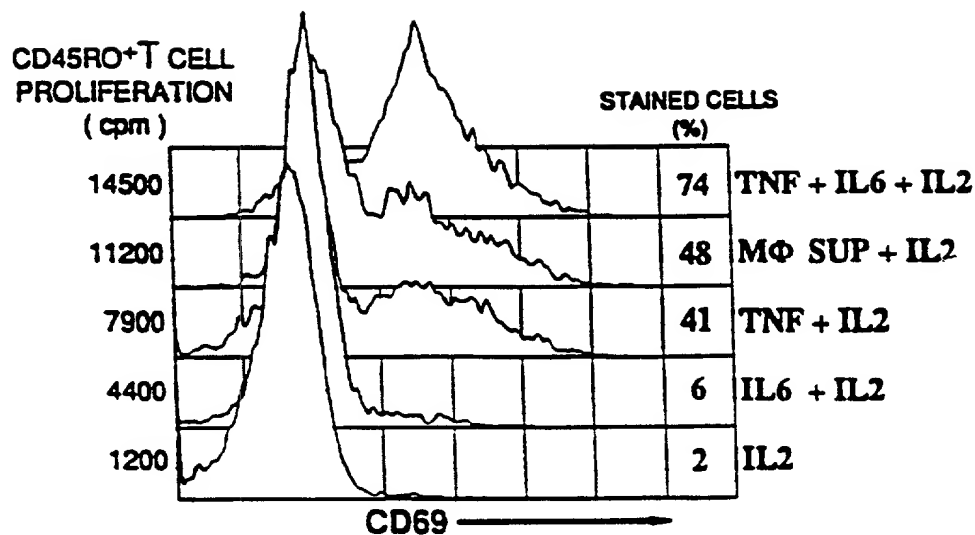


FIG.3(A)

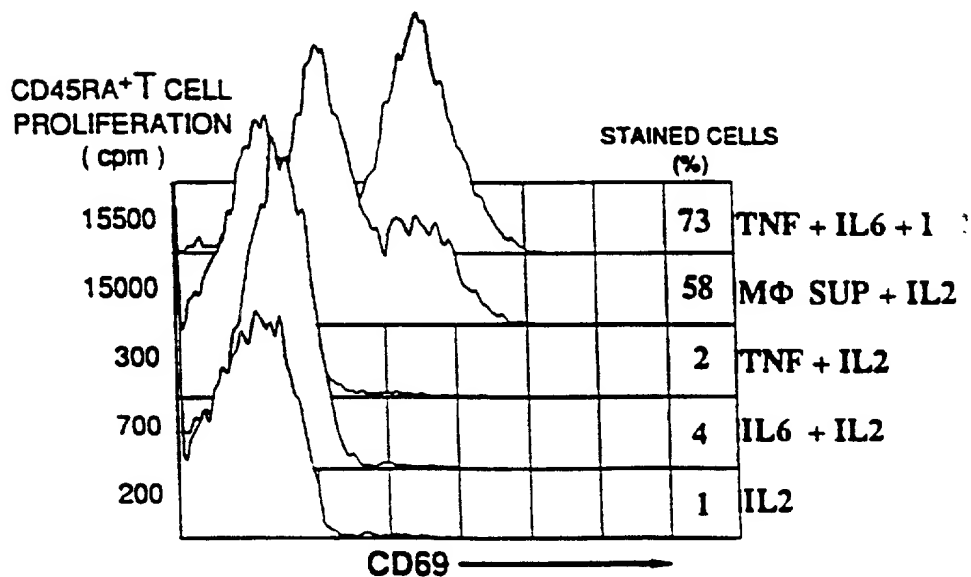


FIG.3(B)

8 / 1 1

FIG. 3(C)

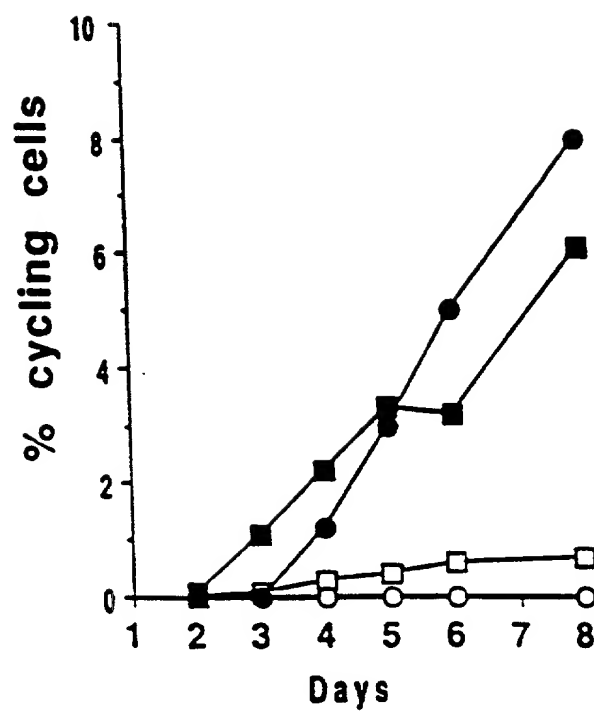
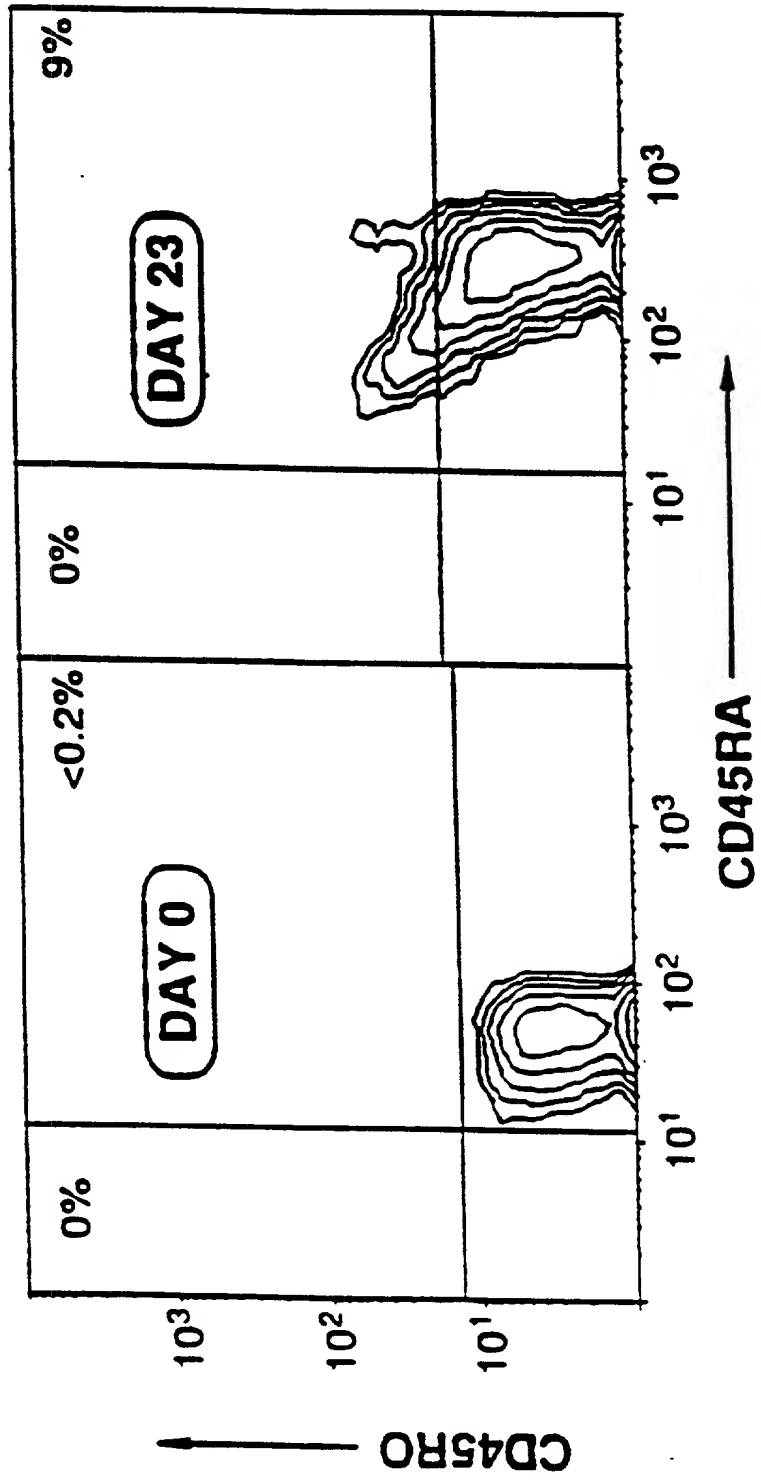


FIG. 4



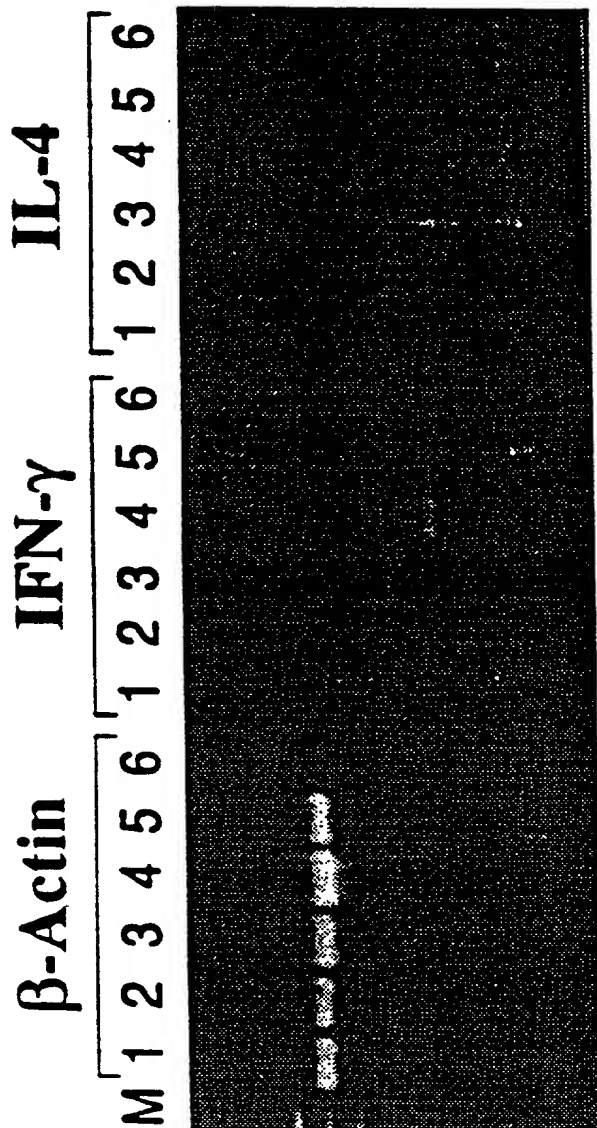


FIG. 5

11/11

FIG. 6

